

# Michigan Sources of Proof

**Primary Sources** are defined as contemporary and/or government records created at the time of the event by the parties involved. These records are deemed acceptable sources to prove relationship from one generation to another.

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| 1. Birth Records               | Michigan official records began in 1867. Available from:  |
| 2. Marriage Records            | a) County clerk of the county where event occurred.   |
| 3. Death Records               | b) Michigan Department of Community Health,<br>P.O. Box 30035, Lansing, MI 48909.   |
| 4. Census Records              | a) <b>Territorial Census</b> (federal) available 1820 and 1830.<br>b) <b>Federal Census</b> available 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930. <i>Note: Census indexes are available for 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860 and 1870. Indexes are located in major Michigan libraries. Soundex indexes available for 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920.</i><br>c) State censuses were taken in 1834, 1845, 1854, 1864, 1874, 1884, 1894 and 1904. <i>Note: Only fragments of these remain.</i>  |
| 5. Probate Records             | Wills/estates (testate—with will; intestate—without will), guardianships, lists of heirs and relationship, name changes, and sometimes transfer of real estate. Records begin at the formation of the county and are found in the probate court where the event occurred.   |
| 6. Land Records and Plats      | Purchase and sale of property often shows residency and marital relationship. Available from the county where the land was owned. Records may be maintained by the Register of Deeds.   |
| 7. Tax Records                 | Taxes were paid on property owned on a yearly basis. Records are available from the time of the county's formation. Records may be located in the Register of Deed's and/or Treasurer's office in county where the land is located.   |
| 8. Military Records            | Records include muster-in and muster-out, pay vouchers, pension papers, and military bounty land warrants (before 1856) for WWI (1914-1918), Spanish-American War (1898-1899), Civil War (1861-1865), Indian & Other Wars (1816-1898), Mexican War (1845-1849), War of 1812 ( 1812-1815), and Revolutionary War (1775-1783). Records are available from the National Archives and Records Service, 8th and Pennsylvania Avenues, N.W., Washington, DC, 20408; or the State Archives of Michigan, 717 W. Allegan, Lansing, MI, 48918. Indexes of Michigan Civil War soldiers are available at most major Michigan libraries. |
| 9. Church Records              | Church records often contain birth, death, marriage, and funeral information of their membership.   |
| 10. Cemetery Records           | Actual records of church, city or township sextons. The Library of Michigan published the <i>Michigan Cemetery Atlas</i> and the <i>Michigan Cemetery Source Book</i> .   |
| 11. Mortuary Records           | Actual records of funeral homes may include death date, burial date, location of interment, obituaries and miscellany.  |
| 12. Burial & Transport Permits | Found in village, city, and township halls or county health departments. Information varies from death date to personal comments.   |

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| 13. Court Records          | Civil, criminal, and divorce records begin from formation of the county and may be located in the circuit court or superior court where the event occurred.  |
| 14. Naturalization Records | Records that indicate when individuals emigrated to Michigan may be located at the National Archives and Records Administration, the State Archives of Michigan, any court of record or from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 425 I Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20536. |

**Secondary Sources** are any sources in print that do not come from a contemporary or government record. These records may not be acceptable as proof.

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| 1. Bible Records  | Dated and/or undated. Include a photocopy of the page showing the publisher, date of publication, and the actual pages showing names, dates, and events. Identify current owners of the Bible when known.  |
| 2. Obituaries   | Dated and identified, when known, name of newspaper and location. Most libraries contain copies of local newspapers. The Library of Michigan has extensive holdings of microfilmed Michigan newspapers, which are available through interlibrary loan to Michigan libraries.   |
| 3. Newspaper Clippings  | Dated and identified, when known name of newspaper and location. Clippings may include anniversaries, biographical sketches, awards, marriage notices, reminiscences, etc.   |
| 4. Family Histories/Genealogies,                                  | When submitting this type of material include a copy of the title page, Published photocopies showing direct ancestral descent and state location of the book. The Library of Michigan has a large statewide collection. Local libraries may have some local genealogies.  |
| 5. County Histories/Portrait and Biographical Histories Published | Almost every county in Michigan has at least one county history with biographical sketches. The Michigan Genealogical Council published the <i>Guide to Michigan Genealogical and Historical Collections at the Library of Michigan and State Archives of Michigan</i> , 1996. Some local libraries will have county histories for the local and surrounding counties. |
| 6. City/County Directories  | The Library of Michigan has an extensive statewide collection of Michigan city directories and has out-of-state directories prior to 1860 on microfiche and from 1861-1960 on microfilm.   |
| 7. Personal Papers/Manuscripts                                    | Unpublished written data include letters, diaries, journals, reunion records, and manuscripts. The Library of Michigan has microfilmed over 400 boxes of unpublished genealogical materials.   |
| 8. Tombstone Inscriptions   | Photographs or transcriptions of the stones. Locations of Michigan cemeteries are shown in the <i>Michigan Cemetery Atlas</i> and companion volume, the <i>Michigan Cemetery Source Book</i> , published by the Library of Michigan.   |
| 9. Atlas/Landowners   | The Library of Michigan has an extensive statewide collection of landowner plat books. Local libraries may have local plat books.  |

Many of the above sources refer to the Library of Michigan's extensive statewide collection. You are encouraged to visit the libraries of your city, township and county as well as the Library of Michigan. Most libraries provide very limited research by mail.

All genealogical societies welcome members and guests to their meetings. Contact the Library of Michigan for the names of the societies in your area.

The Library of Michigan is located at 702 West Kalamazoo Street, in Lansing. The Library's mailing address is P.O. Box 30007, Lansing, MI 48909. Current hours, subject to change, are 8 A.M. to 6 P.M. weekdays, 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. on Saturday and 1 P.M. to 5 P.M. on Sunday. The Library is closed on official holidays. Telephone 517-373-1300 for more information or visit our website at *michigan.gov/hal*.